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ABSTRACT

Changes in the structure of education and more money are what education in the eighties will require. There are some specific issues that can be identified and must be addressed in education: (1) revitalization of compensatory programs; (2) preparation of students to function in a multilingual, multicultural world; (3) accountability of educators at all levels; (4) full funding for exceptional student education; (5) construction needs for schools in the eighties; (6) revitalizing urban centers; and (7) realistic solutions to vocational education needs. Students need to learn how to live in the adult world rather than the academic world. The local, state, and federal governments and professional educators must work together to continue and to capitalize on the education children currently receive. (SAS)

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FACING THE EIGHTIES:

ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY, AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION NEEDS

A retrospective look at the 1970's indicates that this was, indeed, one of the most challenging periods in the history of public education. As we consider what lies ahead for the 1980's, it is clear that whatever success and improvements we will make in the future rest largely with the seriousness with which professional educators, legislators, parents, and community members join hands to forge new partnerships. It may be trite, but it is certainly true, that no chain is stronger than its weakest link. Education for the 1980's will almost surely demand that each link in the chain become strong, effective, efficient, committed, and vigilant in meeting the objectives established for our nation's educational institutions.

The expectations of parents, the public, students, the state, and the federal government for our schools will be greater than ever before. It will be expected that all of our graduates be literate and prepared for the world of work and for higher education, as well as for active citizenship. We need to prepare students to function in a multicultural, multilingual society. Additionally, it will be expected that the public schools be attractive, well-designed, and well-maintained edifices in which interesting, humane and disciplined instruction takes place. Academic excellence will need to be more than a slogan; it will need to be a reality, not just for some students, but for all.

There is, after all, only one basic purpose for a child to come to school, and that is to learn. Yet, this basic purpose is so complex and difficult because of the differences in the way children learn and the rate at which they can gain knowledge and understanding. These differences are due, of course, to many factors: background, home environment, study habits, previous experience, varying cognitive and affective levels -- all of these contribute to why some children learn quickly while others do not. Education's mission is to prepare each child for a meaningful productive life, regardless of individual background or ability.

Moreover, it is an essential prerequisite that parents, teachers, and administrators work together continuously for the sake of children. Learning is not a process that happens in a vacuum. For this reason, everybody is inextricably joined in impacting academic excellence and children's mastery of the basic skills.

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I do not believe there are easy solutions for the complex educational problems which beset us. There is danger that none of the issues which need to be resolved will be resolved on the basis of the best knowledge and in the most objective fashion possible unless effort is made to do so. We can tackle these problems with professional and civic integrity if we wish to make the effort to do so, and in this way hope to shape the educational enterprise of the next century to our design and in our children's and the general population's best interests. The alternative will be a more politically divisive, fragmented and less effective educational system than we have today.

Unflinching commitment to professional integrity and competence, the demonstrated sensitivity to children's learning needs and problems, and the unswerving belief in their ability to achieve; these are the qualities that must be advocated firmly and aggressively in the decade to come.

As we look towards the 1980's, there are some specific issues that can be identified. These issues must be addressed, and solutions must be proposed and acted on if the educational chain is to remain strong.

● REVITALIZATION OF COMPENSATORY PROGRAMS

A wide range of educational programs funded through federal or state legislative provisions; e.g., Title I and State Compensatory Education, requires that all funds be expended on a supplementary basis. Further requirements prevent the comingling of resources and the supplanting of any services or materials provided to students in the regular program.

The traditional response to these requirements across the nation has been to schedule students into the specially funded programs during the school day. This causes the child to be denied whatever instruction was provided in the regular program for the duration of the specially funded program. This form of supplanting has been permitted to continue although it represents a clear denial of equal educational opportunity to students participating in the specially funded program.

A national model must be developed which eliminates the negative educational aspects prevalent in current practice and increases students' opportunity to participate in a balanced curriculum. A program which attempts to deal with this problem is in its first year of full implementation in Dade County, Florida. It is called the Extended School Program (ESP) and has as its most unique feature the provision of additional or specially funded programs <u>after</u> regular school hours.

In order to provide a program which truly supplements rather than supplants the regular school day experience, all Title I elementary school students in Dade County, Florida, attend an extended school day program. To assure the effectiveness of this program, a uniform instructional model has been implemented. This effort is intended to increase

the opportunity for students to participate in a balanced curriculum during the regular school day and to reinforce and apply the skills introduced through regular programs. These programs are located at the student's home school, thus providing for a stronger articulation of skills between regular and Title I programs. The additional structured learning time serves to assist the parent and student in using the school and community more effectively as a learning laboratory.

The instructional model, which is utilized in all sixty-seven Title I elementary schools, specifies an adult/pupil ratio of 15 to 1; teacher-directed instruction utilizing specified standards cooperatively developed by district personnel, Title I staff, and concerned parents; independent reading and math skills application through an applied curriculum extension component; the provision of educational rather than recreational learning incentives; and parent involvement in tutoring and support functions.

Although Dade County, Florida has taken only the first step towards the revitalization of compensatory education, the potential of this concept for incorporation into a national model has become clear.

- PREPARATION OF STUDENTS TO FUNCTION IN A MULTILINGUAL, MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

The ability to function effectively in multilingual, multicultural settings is an economic survival skill for the 1980's in the major urban areas of this nation.

As a primary educational goal, it should be public policy at the national level that all students become proficient in the English language. It should also be recognized that other languages, both as objects of instruction and as tools for learning, are of great significance if we are to meet the special needs and interests of large segments of our population. It is recommended, therefore, that national language goals be established and that fiscal and administrative support be provided to help ensure that each student, to the extent individual physical, mental, and emotional capacities permit, will achieve consistent progress toward the attainment of these goals. The national language goals should include at least the following:

Goal I All students who are of limited English profiency shall participate in a program which is especially designed to enable such students to communicate and function successfully in their English-speaking environment.

Goal II All students shall have the opportunity and shall be strongly urged to participate in programs designed to enable students to communicate and function successfully in an environment where another language other than English is used.

Goal III All students shall have the opportunity and shall be strongly urged to participate in programs using another language other than English in addition to English as the medium of instruction to the extent that such participation is consistent with the learning needs of the students and the interests of the students and parents.

Only when these goals have been achieved will this nation's commitment to the diverse needs of all its citizens have been met.

● ACCOUNTABILITY OF EDUCATORS AT ALL LEVELS

The diminishing confidence in public schools and concurrent trends toward such devices as tuition tax relief credits, voucher systems, and "Proposition 13" legislation must be reversed. Educational accountability at all levels is the only acceptable course of action the national educational community can take in response to public concerns. Strong, competent leadership at all administrative levels, local, state, and national, must be clearly evident to students, the parents, the business community, and citizens, if education is to maintain public confidence.

Public school systems must inspire confidence through the implementation of creative approaches to accountability.

State and local educational agencies, assisted by legislation as necessary, must establish standards for student promotion and graduation. Such standards must be cooperatively determined in accordance with societal and economic needs and must be responsive to the aspirations of students and their parents. Objective assessment of progress towards the attainment of these standards and the provision of appropriate instructional strategies, designed to produce mastery of these standards, must be an integral part of this process.

Diagnostic/prescriptive testing programs must be incorporated in negotiated contracts with unions. Such contracts must contain specific provisions related to the demonstration by teachers, through the performance of their professional responsibilities, a mastery of basic skills, subject matter skills, and fundamental teaching competencies. This emphasis requires the development of guidelines, diagnostic tests, and assessment techniques to implement this important effort. Necessary training of administrative personnel must take place to insure a fair and equitable implementation of all provisions of a diagnostic/prescriptive testing program to improve the quality of instruction. Diagnostic/prescriptive approaches have proven successful in raising student performance; they have the same potential to raise teacher performance as well.

All administrative personnel must be held accountable for developing and implementing program plans which contribute to the accomplishment of cooperatively established educational objectives. Accountability must be appraised through a comprehensive assessment of the overall performance of each administrator. A systematic procedure for identifying and rewarding administrative excellence must be established. Management training efforts must be undertaken to improve administrative skills. Those administrators whose performance, despite intensive training efforts, has not proved effective, should not be shielded by the system; their lack of proficiency will be reflected ultimately in the performance of students.

State legislatures and departments of education must work together to provide enabling legislation and implementation guidelines which are supportive of the goals for which education must be accountable.

In order for students, teachers, administrators and state agencies to achieve true educational accountability, it is essential that a strong and vigorous national education policy be instituted. Such a national policy would direct the flow of resources to state and local educational agencies contingent upon progress toward demonstrated accountability.

● FULL FUNDING FOR EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION

The exceptional student is being brought into the educational mainstream both literally and figuratively. As school districts across this nation seek to implement the various provisions of Public Law 94-142, they are faced with a moral and fiscal dilemma. Funds are simply inadequate to do all that is required and implied in legislation concerning exceptional students.

In the decade ahead, problems related to exceptional education will not abate; on the contrary, they will increase in intensity and complexity. As mainstreaming becomes the educational *modus operandi*, new models for preservice and inservice teacher education programs will need to be developed. Construction guidelines for school buildings will need to be examined and revised to meet the educational needs of handicapped students in the spirit of the least restrictive environment.

As parents become more involved in the needs of their exceptional children, federal, state, and local rules and regulations will have to be reexamined in order to assure equitability for exceptional youngsters without hamstringing local school personnel. These are just a few examples of the many issues related to exceptional student education that will have to be faced.

To believe that these problems can be addressed, much less solved, without a massive infusion of funds is naive in the extreme. To date, federal and state legislation in this area has outstripped the fiscal ability of school districts to comply. In the 1980's, this cannot continue; it will be all students who suffer

● CONSTRUCTION NEEDS FOR SCHOOLS IN THE EIGHTIES

In addition to programmatic needs, school districts will be faced with the problem of adapting school buildings to the environment of the eighties. These adjustments will more likely consist of remodeling existing buildings rather than new construction.

Such remodeling will include the very obvious: renovating, maintaining, and updating older school buildings, some of which are located in decaying community areas, so that these buildings will serve to uplift the community and not contribute to community decay.

In addition, in many urban school districts large numbers of school buildings were built more than 50 years ago in response to different educational needs. Renovations, then, for these buildings should proceed from the standpoint of providing adequate educational space for school children of the eighties by converting these spaces to meet new programming requirements, such as greater reliance on individualized instruction, the use of flexible media centers and systems, bilingual education, career and vocational education, and modern technology.

School buildings also exist in that same energy-scarce environment in which other institutions must function. Substantial needs exist to operate these school buildings in a more energy-efficient manner, hopefully with greater reliance on renewable sources of energy such as solar systems. A conversion of plants, which were designed in an oil-rich era, to school buildings which are adequately insulated and which use energy-efficient equipment, requires considerable capital expenditures which many school districts do not possess.

Further, the renovation of school buildings should stress flexibility of space. Shifting populations may result in the eventual conversion of school buildings to multi-purpose community centers or perhaps even to shops or apartments. The aging of American society will generate new needs for educational programs and facilities which far surpass traditional utilization of public school buildings.

Unless states and the federal government can subsidize these substantial expenditures, many school districts will be faced with the dilemma of attempting to continue to cope with new needs with obsolete plants and equipment. Diverting resources from instructional purposes to meet these needs will reduce districts' ability to adapt instructional programs for the eighties.

Meeting future needs of education is obviously not totally, or even primarily, dependent on adequate school buildings. However, school buildings which are inappropriately designed and maintained do form a certain parameter and constraint to any efforts to render education more responsive to instructional needs. Winston Churchill once stated that we shape our buildings and thereafter they shape us. Conscious efforts to use and modify existing school buildings should represent a primary consideration in the agenda for action for the decade to come.

● REVITALIZING URBAN CENTERS

Public education in this country will be able to survive only to the extent that urban education survives. But urban education is in serious trouble. The large, sprawling urban school systems have failed to teach the poor and the minorities even the basics, much less acceptable social or occupational skills. A society that strives for democracy must be concerned when whole groups of children are not being prepared for responsible citizenship.

The middle class--perceiving the schools as deteriorating--is taking flight, either to the suburbs or to private education. Whereas this country once saw its public education system as the vehicle for upward mobility, we are now facing a situation that can only widen the division between haves and have-nots.

As the middle class moves out, we are getting increasing pressure, not only for restrictions on school budgets but, also, for vouchers and tuition tax credits. People object to paying private

tuitions while supporting the public schools with their tax dollars. Among the things that we stand to lose are the "frills," which are, in many cases, things that are badly needed to balance the curriculum.

With the loss of confidence in the school system, educators are no longer accorded automatic authority and respect. Accountability is the watchword today. This makes it necessary for schools and educators to develop a new approach to their basic mission, which is to deliver equal opportunity to all, so that each student can achieve his or her highest potential. Public educators must begin by no longer defining their output as teaching done, but as learning proven. The goal of equality of educational opportunity may well require an unequal distribution of dollars to meet the unequal needs of minority and poor children.

To stretch finances, teachers and administrators must become informed brokers who can coordinate educational demand with community supply. In Dade County, a program has been initiated called Dade Partners, in which businesses lend their support to the schools. This kind of cooperation between school and community is as important to the future health of the schools as is cooperation within the school system. With so many attacks coming from without, it is essential that school boards, administrators, teachers, unions, parents, and students work together toward a better future. Our public school system is the best hope we have for educating our youth and our best investment in human capital.

- LOOKING FOR REALISTIC SOLUTIONS TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION NEEDS

Each year millions of students drop out of school or graduate without employable skills or the preparation to continue their studies after high school. To support these young people on welfare rolls or to involve them in expensive vocational rehabilitation programs is unconscionably wasteful. What is needed is a preventative approach to vocational education.

Preparation for the world of work should begin at the elementary level and continue through the junior and senior high school. This developmental

process should be staged so that at the end of a student's school career a specified job-entry level of skills development will have been attained.

In the provision of such a program, involvement with private and public employers is not only desirable, but essential. All experiences and materials used should, of necessity, be representative of the actual business and industrial setting in which the student will function. Together, education and business must identify the kinds of jobs that are needed, where they will be located, and the best way young people can be prepared to assume them.

What is also needed is a new look at the development of vocational counseling programs. Disadvantaged minority students must be encouraged to train for a variety of vocational roles. We cannot afford to counsel disadvantaged students into stereotyped job roles. New ways must also be found to counsel and train young women so that they may enter vocations which have previously been denied to them, despite their potential.

Federal legislation could be the catalyst which brings about realistic solutions to vocational problems. As just one example, current legislation does not insure that CETA prime sponsors work cooperatively with public school officials. Without such cooperation, the solutions to the problems of the disadvantaged unemployed will never be found.

Education cannot and should not delay the preparation of students for the world of work until they are young adults. What is needed is a comprehensive program beginning in the elementary grades with career awareness and extending through the middle and secondary grades with career counseling and guidance. As an integral part of this comprehensive program, but clearly delineated, should be creatively conceived and realistically designed vocational education programs in secondary and post-secondary situations.

A definite, clear national policy on career education in general and on vocational education within our public schools, and the funds to back it up, are essential if the needs of society are to be met.

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CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the struggle for equal opportunity is essentially the fight for the ascendancy of reason and humanity over ignorance and indifference. This thought must be a beacon for education in the decade ahead.

Professional educators and the various publics who are committed to children's academic achievement must clearly resolve that equivocation and procrastination will no longer be accepted. They must respond accordingly. The same determination that spurred educational advances in the 1970's should again be summoned to reinvigorate efforts for the 1980's.

Schools must not lose faith in the ability of students to learn, nor should communities lose faith in the ability of schools to lead. The schools are crucial to the positive resolution of any of society's problems. If our youth leave schools prepared only for unemployment and dependency, the vicious cycle of society's ills will be perpetuated.

During the 70's, children were taught to read better, write better, compute better, behave properly, and survive in a competitive society. These successes must be capitalized on in the years to come. Along avenues opened by learning and understanding lie the hope and inspiration of past, present, and future generations of citizens. To continue to provide optimal opportunities for young people to attain their educational and human potential should be the pledge of all involved in education. To this end, nothing less than total commitment will suffice.